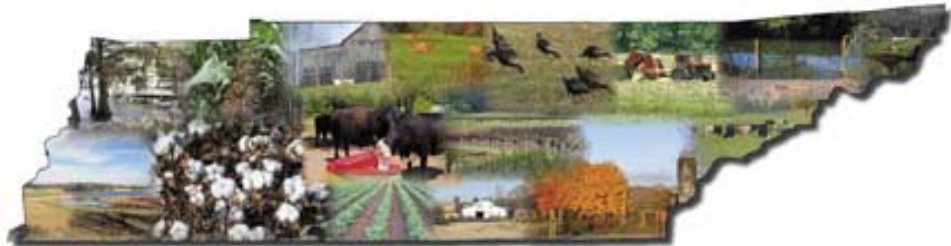




675 U. S. Courthouse
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
Telephone: 615/277-2531
FAX: 615/277-2577

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Current Developments

Helping People Help the Land

June 2006

Message from the State Conservationist



I am proud of your work, and I know that NRCS-Tennessee is very fortunate to have such a committed workforce dedicated to putting conservation on the ground. Let us continue to work hard in achieving our mission of Helping People Help the Land.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for all your help and support in implementing the organizational restructure plan announced at our recent statewide teleconference. I hope that the meeting helped answer your questions about the plan and the direction in which our agency is headed. If you have questions that were not answered, or if you are in need of further clarification, I urge you to contact your Area Conservationist or State Office manager.

As you know, the details of the restructuring plan are still being worked out, and as next steps are determined, we will inform you of them. In the meantime, managers are available to discuss your concerns. Working together, we will successfully implement the formation of our watershed teams and help meet the goals of the agency and satisfy the needs of our customers.

James W. Ford
State Conservationist

Inside This Issue....

	Page
Anderson County Landowner Protects Water Quality	3
RC&D Awarded Grant by Major League Baseball	10
Conservation Education Events	8
Control Burn Training	9
Earth Team News	4
Envirothon State Winner	7
Hinds Creek Farm Tour	11
NRCS Partners to Restore Piney River Bank	4
Robertson County Landowner Achieves Goals	2
Smith Co Youth Board Named TWF 2006 Youth Conservationist	5
Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work	6

Upcoming Events

Milan No-Till Field Day Milan, TN	July 27, 2006
TN RC&D Council Annual Meeting For more information, contact: Cumberland Mtn. RC&D 865.494.2343 ext. 5	August 3-4, 2006 Museum of Appalachia Clinton, TN
Tennessee Small Farms EXPO & Recognition Program Tennessee State University Research & Extension Demonstration Farm For more information, contact: Michael McLendon @ 615.963-2598	August 3, 2006

Robertson County Landowner Achieves Conservation Goals

by Jennifer Chastain

When Elvis Bellar first started working with NRCS and the Robertson County SCD to enhance the natural resources on his farm, he was working full time for Montgomery Farmers Co-op and farming part time. His first project was to convert 25 acres that had been cropped that he felt would be better suited for pasture since his farm is located in the bend of the Red River and there were some runoff concerns. He was approved for funding under the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to install a Best Management Practice. The 25 acres was sown in fescue and clover. After establishment this provided another pasture/ hay field for him so he could expand his cattle herd. This was the first of many projects that were completed over the next several years, all the time working towards Elvis Bellar's long range goal of farming full time.



Robertson County landowner Elvis Bellar has utilized EQIP, CRP and TDA costshare funds to attain his conservation goals.

Mr. Bellar now has 90 acres of cropland and 98 acres of pasture/hay and he raises corn, wheat, soybeans and tobacco on his farm in the Mint Springs community of northwest Robertson County. He is very conscientious in his farming practices. He plants his corn and soybeans using no till methods and leaves his crop residue on the surface throughout the year and also uses cover crops.

After the installation of the alternative water system, I saw an increase in my weaning weights. The water flow is consistent and there is fresh water available at all times.

Elvis Bellar, Landowner

He has improved his cattle operation by participating in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He received cost share on exclusion fencing, cross fencing, pipeline and a livestock watering system through EQIP. Mr. Bellar said, "After the installation of the alternative water system, I saw an increase in my weaning weights. The water flow is consistent and there is fresh water available at all times." His cattle were previously using a pond for water that in the summer needed significant amounts of rain to keep it full. The cattle

have now been excluded from this pond and now use a centrally located watering system that was installed as part of the rotational grazing plan under the EQIP program.

Mr. Bellar also wanted to enhance the wildlife habitat on his farm. This goal has been achieved through the Conservation Reserve Program. Last year he installed a 3.5 acre field border around the upper side of his crop field. This border was sown in a native warm season grass mix. This spring we installed a 3.2 acre filter strip next to the Red River. This filter strip was also sown in a native warm season grass mix. The filter strip accomplishes two goals Mr. Bellar had filtering runoff from his crop field and providing habitat for wildlife. He and his son like to do a little hunting in their spare time. Mr. Bellar said, "The CRP program has improved the quantity of wildlife on this farm that would have been nonexistent."

Mr. Bellar, and many other Robertson County landowners, have been able to accomplish their goals and alleviate environmental concerns on their farms by utilizing the multitude of programs available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other conservation agencies. This was accomplished through assistance provided by the EQIP, CRP and TDA cost share programs.



Anderson County Landowner Protects Water Quality

by Matthew Denton

Donley and Eunice Hill own a thirty-eight acre farm that runs along the Clinch River in Anderson County. Mr. Hill recently retired from the United States Forest Service with the National Forests in North Carolina. His wife, Eunice, is a librarian with Norris Middle School in Anderson County. They are both avid supporters of soil and water conservation and being good stewards of the environment they knew the process of establishing and/or maintaining a livestock operation while keeping the potentially harmful effects of production at a minimum would be especially arduous.

With these issues in mind, the Hills contacted the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Anderson County Soil Conservation District (SCD) in Clinton for technical assistance with several conservation, wildlife habitat, and production concerns they had on their property. Due to the constant fluctuation in water level and flow of the Clinch River when Norris Dam is generating, the banks of the river were becoming saturated and eroding severely. A survey of the eroded areas was completed by the NRCS with assistance from Anderson County SCD on two different locations totaling 300 feet on the banks of the Clinch River. Using diagrams and recommendations from NRCS, the banks of the river were sloped back, geo-textile filter fabric was installed, and rock rip-rap was placed to stop the erosion of the river bank and stabilize these areas from eminent water fluctuations. Another conservation concern was a tributary which essentially dissects the farm into two management areas and empties into the Clinch River. There were three main locations that were eroding on this tributary. Geo-textile filter fabric and large diameter rock rip-rap was installed to stabilize these areas. Also, the critical areas adjacent to the construction zones were sown to a high rate of winter wheat and mulched.



Photo above: Donley Hill, Anderson County landowner and Matthew Denton, NRCS District Conservationist, with 8 students and David Rogers, advisor from Clinton High School after completing the riparian area tree planting.

To further stabilize all the areas of concern, a variety of riparian and wildlife friendly species were planted by Earth Team Volunteers along the banks of the river and the tributary. Eight Clinton High School Agriculture students, their teacher, David Rogers, NRCS, and Anderson County SCD logged forty-five hours of volunteer service on this task. There were approximately 1000 trees and shrubs planted totaling one and one half miles of riparian area including: loblolly and white pine, sawtooth and nuttall oak, flowering dogwood, hawthorne, indigobush, sycamore, and sugarberry. Some of these trees and shrubs were chosen for their extensive root systems, such as the sycamore and oak, others for their benefits to wildlife, such as the sugarberry and indigobush, with the pines providing a natural barrier and erosion control and flowering dogwoods for their aesthetic value.



Photo above: The woven-wire exclusion fence that was installed on the Hill farm. The area behind the fence has also been stabilized utilizing filter fabric and rip-rap rock.

Another concern of the Hills was cattle access to the river and creek. Knowing the possibility of detrimental effects to water quality from prolonged livestock exposure, NRCS and Anderson County SCD recommended exclusion fencing which has been installed along the tributary and the Clinch River. Over one mile of woven-wire fencing has been installed.

The Hills are in the process of installing additional streambank stabilization utilizing cedar tree revetments, cross-fencing to promote a rotational grazing system, and automatic watering facilities in strategic places to provide water to their cattle due to exclusion of the animals from the creek and river. The installed and future conservation practices should enhance and maintain the Hill farm for a long time.

BSA Troop 593, Volunteer River Restoration Corp, and NRCS Help Landowner Restore Piney River Banks

by Wynne Mitchell

On Saturday April 1, 2006 members from Dickson's BSA Troop 593 worked with the Duck River Opportunities Project (DROP), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Volunteer River Restoration Corps (VRRRC) (a joint project of the Harpeth River Watershed Association (HRWA) and the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association (TSRA)) to install over 1300 plants in an area of the Piney River's bank that had been eroding.

Wynne Mitchell, NRCS DC, Dickson County contacted the Volunteer River Restoration Corps (VRRRC) to see if they would be interested in helping a landowner complete the stream restoration project. The landowner had previously installed several rock jetties – rock structures that point upstream and deflect high flows away from eroding stream banks. These particular jetties were designed by NRCS bioengineers to protect the landowner's fields along the eroding pasture.



Scouts from Dickson County Troop 593 installed just over 1300 plants in under 3 hours along the Piney River off Mt Sinai road. (Photo by John McFadden)

Once the jetties are installed, the area is planted in grass, tree seedlings and "live stakes." Live stakes are cuttings of black willow and sycamore treated with a rootone (makes roots sprout). The live stakes are installed from the waters edge up about 10 feet to the top of the stream bank. The seedlings are planted from the top of the stream bank out to about 25 feet. The 15 scouts installed just over 500 plants per hour, possibly a new VRRRC record!

Troop 593 was led by Scoutmaster Ron Campbell of Dickson and assisted by Timothy Black. Scouts helping out included John Campbell, Mike Coones, T.J. Black Jr., Mathew Welson, John Gilliam, Spencer Trent, Mathew McLendon, Andrew Nelson, Sam Hall, and Derek Hall and others. Scouts were assisted by HRWA/DROP staff members Mike Cain (Restoration Specialist) and John McFadden (Director of Science and Restoration).

The Piney River is one of the Duck River's healthiest tributaries – and the Duck River is one of the world's most biologically diverse freshwater systems with 54 types of mussels (freshwater clams) and 151 types of fishes. In addition the Duck River and its tributaries, such as the Piney, serve as a drinking water supply for many communities and as a recreational resource for the middle Tennessee area. This brings a significant economic gain to the local communities.

The VRRRC has worked with scouts and other volunteers throughout the Harpeth River and Duck River watersheds in an effort to improve the quality of the river system through a combination of cooperative restoration and education. For more information visit HRWA's website at www.Harpethriver.org.

Tennessee Earth Team News

Tennessee's Earth Team is thriving and proving why Tennessee is the volunteer state. According to the FY06 National Earth Team Mid-Year Status Report, Tennessee ranks 4th in the nation for our number of individual volunteers. Tennessee had 145 Earth Team volunteers at the mid-year mark, following only Kansas (371), Missouri (167), and Oklahoma (166).

Tennessee's Earth Team is performing at a high level in several other categories, too. Compared to other states, Tennessee had the 7th highest number of offices using volunteers; the 9th highest number of volunteer groups, and the 10th highest number of members within volunteer groups.

Congratulations to Earth Team State Coordinator Dimple Geesling and all the area coordinators: West TN - Debbie Blankenship & Faye Floyd; Middle TN - Heather Conner & Cory Hodge; East TN - Lorella Jennings & Terron Hillsman. Keep up the good work, Earth Team!

Smith County Conservation Youth Board TWF Youth Conservationist of the Year

by Heather Conner

The Smith County Conservation Youth Board, organized in May 2004, has become a leader and example to the community in a short time. They were recently recognized for their efforts when the Tennessee Wildlife Federation named them the 2006 Youth Conservationist of the Year at a reception in Nashville in March 2006.

This young group of volunteers began by participating in Conservation Field Days held in different counties in Middle TN to learn more about conservation and the roles that they could play in conservation education. From there, they have taught youth about soil conservation and the inhabitants of the soil. One particular project was to staff a booth at the Wilson County Fair on "Kid's Day". The group gave presentations on earthworms and the layers of the soil and provided handouts and hands-on activities for over 200 children.

The group held an event in November 2005 which they titled "Operation Clean Xstream". They built bluebird and wood duck boxes and hung them around Cordell Hull Lake and its Wildlife Management Area. The group picked up litter and debris from multiple illegal campsites and networked with agency personnel from USDA, UT Extension, US Army Corps of Engineers, and TWRA. The students learned about global information systems and marked the location of each of the wildlife boxes they hung in order to go back to them in the spring for cleanout. They also learned about the nesting habits of both bluebirds and wood ducks. This project involved multiple partners and educated the community on the importance of their natural resources and conserving them.

They held a Christmas Tree drive where they collected trees after the holidays to be used as fish attractors. The students learned about the advantages and disadvantages of these attractors and once again gained the attention of the community when over 80 trees were donated for the project. On March 4th, the youth board met at Defeated Park on Cordell Hull with TWRA, US Army Corps of Engineers Rangers, local Bass Clubs, and other Earth Team Volunteers to anchor the attractors on Cordell Hull Lake. The Corps was able to provide buoys labeled for fish attractors on all the sites.

The group had a large truckload of wood donated to them that they plan to use for wildlife boxes. They plan to build and hang several bluebird boxes in an area at the back of the local nursing home for the patients to enjoy. They also plan to build and hang several more wood duck boxes along the Caney Fork River in the Smith County Agriculture Complex. The Complex entertains hundreds of sports enthusiast from soccer to baseball and houses a walking trail for locals to enjoy by the river. The group thought this would be a great place to hang the boxes along with signage to educate the sports players and walkers on the importance of providing habitat for these birds.

The Smith County Conservation Youth Board prides themselves in their volunteer work and believes in the importance of educating everyone in the community. Whether youth education or adult education, they haven't found any job they aren't willing to take on. This group displays extraordinary zeal for conservation and wildlife, and makes community involvement and education prime goals in any of their projects. Often youths in communities tend to lean toward hobbies and activities that leave them indoors instead of enjoying the open outdoors. This group not only enjoys and appreciates the outdoors but they have made it their mission to make others aware of the Great Outdoors.



Photo above: Smith County Conservation Youth



Photo above: Tennessee Wildlife Federation names Smith County Conservation Youth Board the 2006 Youth Conservationist of the Year.



Photos above and below: Members of the Smith County Youth Board collected Christmas trees for use as fish attractors.



Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

On Monday, June 5, we observed the Ms Foundations "Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day" here at NRCS in Tennessee. 20 children across the state participated. I've heard from many of the employees, and they and the children enjoyed the time spent together. This program is intended to "expand opportunities for girls and boys, expose them to what adults in their lives do during the work day, show them the value of their education, and give them an opportunity to share how they envision their future."

Some of the employees took the children in their personal vehicles to look at RC&D projects, EWP sites, and conservation practices. Some traveled to other offices where other disciplines were located and the children were shown other aspects of the agency and the diversity of our workforce and the work that we do. Some children spent the day in the office, observing the normal routine of the day, and being shown the "inside" part of what we do. I heard ice cream treats were also an enjoyable part of the day for many of the adults and children!

Whether you spent a half day or a full day with the children in your lives, you have created a memory and planted a seed. This is the workforce of the future. I appreciate the cooperation and participation of all the employees who took part in this day. Whether you brought children, or just took the time to show someone else's children what you do, I thank you. The children will receive a goodie bag, a certificate for participating, and a memory that will last a lifetime.

Debbie Brasfield
Federal Women's Program Manager



Photo's above: Jake Hoskins, age 9, and Katie Hoskins, age 7, participated in "Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Day" with their mom Pam Hoskins. They had a chance to visit both the Woodbury FO where Pam works, and the Murfreesboro FO/AO where they met with Larry Robeson, DC; Paula Schroth, Administrative Coordinator; and Mike Hart, GIS Specialist. Larry Robeson discussed the uses of corn and soybean products. Jake and Katie then visited with Mike Hart, whom they quickly named the "Map Man". Mike showed them the maps and map tools he has and how they are used and explained how rainfall flows from the top of a watershed to the bottom. Paula Schroth explained that she helps employees with their administrative and computer problems.



Photo's above, l to r: Sarah Woodall, age 13, and Hannah Woodall, age 11, enjoyed working on the computer, looking at maps, and even helping Dad James Woodall use the digital camera.



Photo above: Hannah Johnson, 8 year old granddaughter of Dimple Geesling, enjoyed working in the office and seeing the erosion problems at Cane Creek Lake - a Hull-York RC&D project (photo at left).



Photo above: Rusty Walker's youngest daughter, Rachel, age 9, spent a few hours learning how Dad "helps save the world, or at least our little corner of it," stated Rusty Walker.

Northwest High on the Trail to International Envirothon

Each RC&D council in Tennessee hosts a regional competition open to area high schools in their RC&D area. The event allows student teams to demonstrate their knowledge of environmental sciences and natural resource management. Students are tested on Forestry, Soils, Wildlife, Aquatics, and a special topic each year. This year's special issue is *Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate*.

The Northwest High School Team from Clarksville, Montgomery County, TN won the state competition after winning first place in the Five Rivers RC&D area. A team from Northwest High school has won first place for 11 consecutive years in the Five Rivers regional competition. The team's coach is Ms. Lena Brown, and team members were Whitney Barnes, Danielle Jones, Crystal Kane, Jaime Taylor, and Jerika Taylor.

The Northwest team, with one substitution, Adam Travis who replaced team member Whitney Barnes, represented Five Rivers at the TN RC&D Council's State Envirothon contest held April 18-19 at Indian Creek Camp in Liberty, TN. Their hard work and diligence paid off and the Northwest team won the state competition by a margin of 45 points, which advances them to compete in the weeklong, 2006 Canon National Envirothon in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada the week of July 23-26 at the University of Manitoba.

Various state and federal agencies contribute their time and expertise to help make the regional and state events possible. Included are many dedicated volunteers, university professors, and employees of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, TDA's Forestry Division, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and others. A special thanks to all who are involved from loyal financial supporters to in-kind volunteers who together ensure the continued success of this program across Tennessee.



Photo above, l to r: Bill Mayo - Five Rivers RC&D Council President; Dale Grandstaff - TN Wildlife Resources Agency and Asst Coach, Team Members: Crystal Kane, Jaime Taylor, Jerika Taylor, Adam Travis, Danielle Jones; Lena Brown - Team Coach; Bill Williams - TN RC&D Council President.

CSP Update

Paul Fults, Area Conservationist, reports that Middle Tennessee is in the process of working with Conservation Security Program (CSP) applicants. Between June 19 and June 30, Area 2 will have processed, signed, and made into contracts 117 CSP applications. The first year's contract payments are also being certified and approved.

Watersheds in Tennessee selected for 2006 CSP eligibility include the Upper Elk River, the Barren River, and Pickwick Lake, all in Middle Tennessee.

TSU Small Farms EXPO & Recognition Program

The Small Farms EXPO & Recognition Program will be held August 3, 2006 at the Tennessee State University Research and Extension Demonstration Farm at 3101 River Road in Ashland City.

The EXPO will run from 9am to 4pm and the Small Farmer Recognition Program will last from noon till 2pm.

For more information, contact Michael McLendon at the TSU Cooperative Extension Program 615.963.2598.

RC&D's Council Annual Meeting - August 3-4, 2006

The Tennessee RC&D's Council Annual Meeting will be held August 3-4, 2006, at the Museum of Appalachia in Clinton. Entertainment will be provided by Bill Landry from the "Heartland Series".

For more information and a registration packet, go to www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov or call the Cumberland Mountain RC&D at 865.494.2343, ext 5.

Third Graders Participate in Soil and Water Stewardship Week

The Robertson County Soil Conservation District in conjunction with NRCS in Springfield recently visited Ms. Sharon Twist's third grade classroom at Watauga Elementary School. The purpose was to educate students about conserving natural resources, specifically water. April 30 - May 7 was designated as Soil and Water Stewardship Week, celebrating the theme "Water Wise". The school visit helped teach children in Robertson County how important it is to conserve water and other resources.

Stewardship Week is overseen by the National Association of Conservation Districts (www.nacdnet.org). It is one of the largest national annual programs to promote conservation.

Many people may take their water supply for granted, but a large network of private and government agencies help protect, treat, and deliver our water. In the United States, over 53,000 community water treatment systems deliver drinking water to millions of people. Over 13 million private wells provide water to families and businesses.

Agriculture, electric power generation, industry, and transportation all depend on water resources. For more information on this year's theme "Water Wise", visit www.stewardshipweek.com.



Jennifer Chastain, NRCS Soil Conservationist in Robertson County, shows Ms. Twist's 3rd grade class the importance of clean water through a pollution water exercise.

2006 Clyde Treece Agricultural Scholarship Recipient

The McNairy County Soil Conservation District presented Cody Knight and Tabitha Jernigan the 2006 Clyde Treece Agricultural Scholarship. The presentations were made during the McNairy Central and Adamsville High School Awards Day Ceremonies.

These \$500 scholarships were presented on behalf of the Soil Conservation District to encourage young men and women to pursue a career in the field of agriculture.



Photo above: Peggy Mitchell, Soil Conservation District Office Administrator presents Cody Knight the 2006 Clyde Treece Agriculture Scholarship at the Awards Day ceremony.

2006 Farm Day - Cannon County

by Pam Hoskins

The 4th graders of Cannon County learned about "Soils of a Different Color" on a recent farm day held at the Raymond Pedigo farm. The students were encouraged to touch, smell and look at soils of different colors. The students learned that these differences can affect plant growth, moisture holding capacity and microbial (soil bugs) activity. Students learned that healthy soils are alive and colorful.

The Farm Day was coordinated by the UT Extension Service and participating sponsors included USDA/NRCS and FSA, Cannon County SCD, the TN Division of Forestry, Woodbury Police Dept., Farm Bureau Women's Organization and the US Fish/Wildlife Service.



Photos above & below: Cannon County Farm Day provided hands-on activities to teach 4th graders the importance of healthy soils.



Control Burn Training

A very successful control burn demonstration and field training was held on April 13th 2006. The training was conducted on a 5 acre woodland block. Mike Huddleston, Area Forester for Houston, Montgomery, and Stewart counties conducted the controlled burn training at the Stewart State Forest. Mr. Huddleston and his coworkers explained strategy, preparation, equipment, clothing, and onsite conditions that should be observed before lighting for a burn.

With prescribed fire, low-intensity flame is applied by trained experts to clear the ground of dangerous fuels like dead wood and brush. Crews use a drip torch, a hand-carried device that pours out a small stream of burning fuel.

Prescribed fire is used only when the temperature, humidity, wind speed, and fuel moisture are within the prescribed fire plan objectives. Prescribed fire is a useful tool for managing forested land. It not only reduces fuels but also enhances habitat for wildlife. It can also minimize insect epidemics and the spread of disease in crowded forest stands.

Conservationists Jennifer Chastain, Robertson County; Wynne Mitchell, Dickson County; and Phillip Wilson and Louis Boyd from Montgomery County participated in the training. Trainees were surprised by the speed and efficiency of the back burn procedure in removing fuel from the forest floor.

Mike Huddleston noted that TDF provides controlled burn service to clients at a rate of \$10.00 per acre if requested.



Photo above: A TN Division of Forestry employee uses a drip torch to pour out a small stream of burning fuel at the prescribed burn training.



Photo above: NRCS employees participate in Prescribed Burn training.



Photo above: Mike Huddleston, TN Division of Forestry, explains the strategy and equipment used in a prescribed burn to NRCS employees.

Current Developments

Current Developments will be issued again in September. Please submit your success stories and items of interest to Perry Stevens (perry.stevens@tn.usda.gov) and Jeanne Eastham (jeanne.eastham@tn.usda.gov) **no later than September 12.**

Items may be submitted at anytime for inclusion in the newsletter or posting on the web. Please submit good-quality photos as a separate attachment, not embedded in the word document. (If the photo is embedded in the word program, please submit a separate jpeg file as well.)

Please rename your photos and identify each photo with a caption that describes what the photo depicts.

For example:

P10010087.jpg could be SumnerCo10087.jpg
(SumnerCo10087.jpg - Native wild season grass on Jackson farm)

If you have any questions, please contact the Public Affairs Staff.

RC&D Awarded Grant by Major League Baseball

Major League Baseball (MLB) and the MLB Players Association has announced its awarding the Hull-York Lakeland RC&D office \$78,942 to build a youth baseball field in Fentress County. The field will be built on the grounds of York Institute High School.

The grant is being awarded through the "Baseball Tomorrow Fund" (BTF). BTF promotes and enhances the growth of youth participation in baseball and softball by funding programs, fields, coaches' trainings and the purchase of uniforms. The awards are granted to non-profit and tax-exempt organizations. About 30 BTF grants are awarded each year totaling more than \$1.5 Million. The average grant amount is \$51,000 and is designed to be sufficiently flexible to enable recipients to address needs unique to their communities.

The Hull-Lakeland RC&D Council will receive its grant money upfront and oversee the building of the field. "This is great news for the council, and even greater news for Fentress County," said Hull-York Lakeland RC&D Coordinator Jeff Sanders. "Fentress County currently has just one field, and that's being used by the high school baseball team, which prevents the youth leagues from practicing on it until the high school season is over. This will greatly expand youth baseball opportunities in Fentress County." Construction is expected to begin by early August with completion scheduled for Spring 2007.

Congratulations Hull-York Lakeland RC&D!



Project partners review the proposed construction plans for the baseball field during the Baseball Tomorrow Fund site visit to Jamestown, TN. Left to right are: Jan Lee, HYL RC&D Council President; Kathy Bradley, Baseball Tomorrow Fund, New York City; Greg Qualls, York Institute Baseball Coach; John B. Mullinix, Fentress County Mayor; and Scott Sandman, Fentress County Chamber of Commerce.

Earth Team Volunteer Jesse Wilcox is Making A Difference

Over many years the local NRCS office in Springfield has benefited from the help of volunteers who assist in the planning and installation of best management practices on land in Robertson County. One such volunteer is Jesse Wilcox of Adams, Tenn. Mr. Wilcox has been volunteering in Robertson County since September of 2000 and has overseen the design and installation of practices such as grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures, field buffer strips, and critical area treatment to name a few.

The Earth Team is an excellent opportunity for people who want to give back to their community, and want to make a difference in conservation of their natural resources.

Mr. Wilcox has donated as much as 300 hours of time to the Earth Team in a year. Mr. Wilcox is no stranger to assisting in the soil conservation efforts of Robertson County; he retired as a Soil Conservationist from NRCS with an emphasis in agronomy. Mr. Wilcox says, "The Earth Team is an excellent opportunity for people who want to give back to their community, and want to make a difference in conservation of their natural resources". In addition to his services in Robertson County, Jesse volunteers in Montgomery County, for the Resource Conservation & Development Council projects, and attends workshops and meetings in NRCS interests.

"Mr. Wilcox is a giving individual, whose true interests and hard work support the soil conservation efforts and help to conserve our natural resources by donating his time to implement best management practices on land in Robertson County," says James Brown, Jr., NRCS District Conservationist for Robertson County. "I appreciate our Earth Team volunteers who make a significant contribution to the important work of the NRCS."

**24th Milan No-Till Field Day
with
Crop Variety Demonstrations
and Equipment Demonstrations
Thursday, July 27
7:00 am - 3:00 pm

North Tract of the Research &
Education Center
Milan, Tennessee**

Hinds Creek Farm Tour

More than 120 landowners, students, and conservation partners attended the Hinds Creek Farm Tour on May 9, 2006. On the first tour stop, Tiffany Foster with TVA, highlighted different stream bank stabilization practices including rock rip-rap, coir fiber roles, V-weirs, and bank sloping with tree plantings which were done by a local Boy Scout Troup.

At the second stop, which was on the David Coppock farm, speakers Todd Reed and Matthew Denton, both with NRCS, discussed several different best management practices including watering system, rotational grazing, heavy use area pads, creek fencing, riparian forest buffers, willow trees staking, and stream crossings.

At the third tour stop, participants got a close-up look at a wetland as Daniel Horne with the Knox County Soil Conservation District, discussed the benefits of wetland habitat.

Partners for this project included:

- Anderson County Soil Conservation District,
- Knox County Soil Conservation District,
- Union County Soil Conservation District,
- TVA-Tennessee Valley Authority,
- NRCS-Natural Resources Conservation Service,
- TDA-Tennessee Department of Agriculture,
- Earth Team Volunteers.



Photo above: Daniel Horne, Knox County Soil Conservationist, talked to participants about wetland plants and the benefits of wetlands.



Photo above: Matthew Denton, District Conservationist in Anderson/Campbell Counties, and Todd Reed, DC in Union/Claiborne Counties explained various best management practices installed at this site including a watering system, rotational grazing, heavy use area pads, creek fencing, riparian forest buffers, willow trees staking, and stream crossings. Photo at left: Hinds Creek Watershed Partnership signs recognize landowners who have installed best management practices in the watershed.



Nature Fest

The second annual Nature Fest for the Upper Cumberland area was held on April 21-23 at several sites throughout the community including Tennessee Technological University, Cane Creek Park, Ensor Sink Park, and Burgess Falls State Park.

Nature Fest activities are a celebration of the great outdoors and the natural resources. More than 600 attendees enjoyed the event thanks to the 30 volunteer presenters and many others who worked behind the scenes. Some of the most popular events included: Nature Kid Activities, Salamanders of Tennessee, SSSnakes, Scavenger hunt, Canoeing, Rocks and Fossils, Night Chorus: Frog Calls, Birds of the Night and the hike at Burgess Falls.

The lead organizer Alfred Ballinger is a local business owner, a newly selected RC&D director and an avid outdoorsman. His inspiration for the event came from his involvement with the annual Pigeon Forge Wildlife Week and his love for the outdoors. Mr. Ballinger is an annual presenter at the Pigeon Forge event and he wanted to have a similar event in his own community.

Partners in the event included the local recreation department, Tennessee Technological University, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, the area Chamber of Commerce, a local performer, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Plans are already under way for the third annual Nature Fest, with talks of extending the number of days and use of resources available in the Upper Cumberland area.



Oak Ridge National Laboratory hosts USDA/DOE SBIR Energy Summit - Must Register by 6/28!

The USDA SBIR program, led by CSREES, is joining its Department of Energy (DOE) counterpart for the first DOE/USDA SBIR Energy Summit at Oak Ridge National Laboratories (ORNL) in Tennessee, July 6-7, 2006. The event will provide a forum to help engage the small business community in the development of renewable energy technologies.

Specifically, the meeting is intended to:

- highlight USDA and DOE SBIR program alternative and renewable energy-related research and energy efficiency-related funding opportunities;
- enhance the ability of public and private researchers to conduct research on cost efficient alternative and renewable energy;
- showcase the research and collaboration opportunities available at ORNL and at regional university partners; and
- engage interested small businesses to facilitate the transfer of publicly supported research results to real world applications.

The event will highlight USDA and DOE programs of interest to farmers and agricultural scientists interested in crops and research related to alternative and renewable energy, biomass, energy efficiency, and related funding opportunities. Federal Program Managers will discuss opportunities to obtain more than \$250M in research grants for product development.

Registration is only available by submitting the registration form as directed at http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir_summit.html and ends June 28th.

- Questions about conference registration should be directed to Angie Fincher (phone: 865-574-5980, fax: 865-574-5738).
- Questions pertaining to the USDA-SBIR program should be directed to Dr. Siva Sureshwaran or Dr. William Goldner.
- Questions pertaining to the DOE-SBIR program can be directed to sbir-sttr@science.doe.gov or <http://www.science.doe.gov/sbir/>.



Photos left & above: Nature Fest offered indoor and outdoor activities for people of all ages.